

True Comedy by Woo Jin (James) Lee

The play was hilarious. Brighton Beach Memoirs is a play that is set during the Great Depression and it highlights a teenage boy named Eugene Jerome who experiences puberty. Eugene also seeks to find his identity as the play progresses. Overall, the play was a great success, and it was in fact far better than the past plays produced in KIS theatre history in terms of acting and creativity.

When I first bought the ticket right after school, I thought it would be just a normal play without humor. I don't enjoy in fact, I abominate tragic or serious plays in general. However, I was excited when people said the play was all about comedy, and it was comedy, true comedy. It was absolutely hilarious.

What made this play so fun and special? It was the performance of the actors. Each actor did their best to show their emotions and characteristics, and it turned out really well. Especially, Chris Kim, who played as Eugene was extremely funny. He was the center of the whole play and he was responsible for leading his whole crew members, but he did it well even though he was a freshman. He was capable of showing a typical American boy in the 1930s going through a puberty. Nonetheless, he definitely have some problems to fix. He firstly has to work on his mumbling habits and stuttering. Stuttering is sometimes understandable because the audience knows that the actors have to memorize a considerable amount of lines, but if an actor stutters constantly, the play tends to get awkward and unrealistic. Secondly, he has to work on his body movements. Sometimes, his body movements were not that expressive especially when he played baseball. He could have been more serious and active when he played his favorite sport, baseball. Another character which I thought was great was Yongmin. He who played as Stanley became emotional and was dedicated to his role. Moreover, Jenny Lee who played as Kate Jerome did exceptionally well. She was indeed strict and intolerant. Nora and Jack Jerome were the two characters who really did a fantastic job in setting up that serious atmosphere. However, frankly, I think some of the female actors could have been better. Sometimes, there were awkward moments because they did not project their voices loud enough so that the audience could clearly hear their words. Furthermore, Laurie Morton's character could have been stronger and more expressive.

However, what I especially liked about this play was not only the characters but also the backstage members who were responsible for the lighting. This play required a lot of lighting effects because the audience can be easily confused between the living room and Eugene's bedroom. I first thought those two settings were somehow attached together. However, the lighting effects distinctively divided the two settings and the audience were able to enjoy the play without getting confused so much. Also, because of the lighting, transitions were smooth and clear.

I personally think that the Brighton Beach Memoirs was the best play I have ever seen in KIS production history. I really enjoy comedy and Brighton Beach Memoirs made me laugh so much. The actors were brilliant in terms of their expressions and movements even though improvements are needed. I hope I can see another play like this in KIS. Well done!